

Regional leaders discuss technology transfer

by Jill Bohn, AFRL Public Affairs

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AFB, Ohio — Military, local government and business leaders came together recently to collaborate on the technology transfer opportunities throughout the regional area and across the state.

Hosted by the Dayton Regional Development Alliance, the forum entitled Tech Transfer in the Global Economy: Where Great Collaborations Take the Dayton Region was held at the National Composite Center in Dayton.

The forum which focused on creating new jobs and boosting the local economy drew the interest of Ohio Gov. Bob Taft who applauded attendees for its ability to using transform defense technology into commercial products. Taft announced a new full-time position that that will work in unison with the Air Force Research Laboratory and NASA Glenn.

“The Miami Valley is truly leading the way in creating the capacity and infrastructure for tech transfer and moving new ideas and research into the market place.

Taft said that the Miami Valley is model for the state and country based upon its political clout, technology prowess and organizational infrastructure. Dayton’s focus on creating new jobs based upon new technologies has become his challenge since becoming Ohio’s governor, he said.

AFRL Commander Major General Paul D. Nielsen spoke on behalf of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. Wright-Patt is home to five of the laboratory’s 10 directorates.

Nielsen said that a vital part of the Air Force’s mission is passing on defense technology to the private sector.

One of the key components of national security is economic security, Nielsen said. He stated that national values have provided us with real steady core: ingenuity, integrity, hard work and dedication.”

“Our economy has been the engine of opportunity,” he stated. “In the Department of Defense, we believe tech transfer is part of our job.

The general cited a letter received by the laboratory from Jack Kilbe winner of last year’s Nobel Prize. Kilbe, credited with the creation of integrated circuits in the 1950s, wrote to thank the Air Force on taking a risk and sticking by him in a time just after transistors had been invented. The spin-off of Kilbe’s technology led to the development of calculators, personal computers, and commercial satellites.

“When we spin off technology we help our community by encouraging economic growth, by encouraging innovation,” Nielsen said.

Nielsen noted that composite materials offer similar opportunities. “They (composite) are one of those seminal ideas that can change society just as the integrated circuits did,” he said.

When asked about future trends in tech transfer, Nielsen responded with three technologies – bio, nano and info. He explained that these technologies reinforce each other, revolutionizing the way we work, allowing for tech transfer to have a bigger role in the future. @